19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

they prefer to spend their nights in Karen villages and do so whenever possible. In the Karen hills the paddy-bins, in which is stored the year's supply of rice, are situated far away from the village along the jungle paths. It is almost unknown for grain to be stolen from them. Among some of the tribes east of Toungoo stealing was punished, until recently, by death. Dr. Mason says that he has never found a Karen who would not lie, if it was to his advantage to do so. This does not agree with my experience.

In various respects, certainly, Karen conduct differs from European conduct. To expect the same standards would be unreasonable. Any fair estimate of the Karen, as of any other primitive people, must take into account the fact that morality with them is group conduct. The behavior of the individual must be regarded in the light of the life and customs of the group to which he belongs. If the actions of the people, considered thus in relation to their own social status, appear capable of betterment, efforts should be put forth to lead the primitive folk to the higher level.

The Karen possess intellectual capacity commensurate with that of other races of Burma. Being subject people in the country, their ancestors were precluded from independent thought and action in essential matters. With the advent of education a sufficient number of the young men and women, though the proportion of the latter is small, has taken collegiate courses with credit to show that they are not inferior to others. The same may be said of many who have won success in practical lines of work. I could name several Karens occupying positions of responsibility that require high mental attainments, who are demonstrating that they are not lacking therein.

The old practice of village communities in exiling widows and orphans to the jungle, and the occasional abandonment of little children by their parents who were attempting to escape from raiders are, happily, things of the past. Fear, the instinct of self-preservation, and superstition serve to explain such phenomena, which must not be taken as indicating that the Karen are lacking in love for children or in humane sentiments. Nowadays orphans find a home without difficulty; widows and aged persons are cared for; parents enjoy their firesides and manifest love for their offspring, with whom they are, in fact, too indulgent, even to their hurt; and young men and women are not above giving tender care to some little niece or nephew.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1918) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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I remember being asked by a family, who had become Christians and were discarding the old ways, to destroy these utensils for them. They had not yet freed themselves of their fears sufficiently to perform an act that seemed to them like desecration.

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796

Families who are about to adopt Burmese customs or to accept Christianity, generally dispose of all their pigs and fowls, with the

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UTENSILS FOR THE SACRED "BGHA" FEAST OF A PWO KAREN FAMILY, BASSEIN DISTRICT.

exception of two or three of the latter and one of the former. When the time for a feast arrives, they make the usual preparations; but before the pig is killed, one of the elders will put his hand on its side and inform the "Mü xa" that the family are about to make their last offering and beg the demons to dismiss them and allow them to go in peace. This rite is called "Ta aw-k' tew kwi Bgha" literally, "eating to finish the 'Bgha'." The statement that this is the final offering is repeated in every address to the spirit uttered during the course of the feast. If the parents of the head of the family are living, they construct a little house and put into it offer-